



Al-Madad: The Help ¹

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The meaning of the word ‘*al-Madad*’

The meaning of the word *al-madad* varies with respect to the disparity of the intention of its proponent.

With regards to the meaning of the word ‘*madad*’, it has been mentioned in the ‘*Lisān al-‘Arab*’:

- ‘We have helped the nation,’ that is, ‘we have aided them with partisans and help.’
- ‘The leader supported his army with horses and men and he aided them,’ and
- ‘He granted them with lots of wealth and he made them wealthy.’

Al-Madad: troops which affiliate with military expeditions [carried out] in the path of Allāh ﷺ.

Imdād[:] is that one dispatches² aid (*madad*).³

Imām Alfayawmī ﷺ said:

‘I aided him with help: I supported him and strengthened him by it.’⁴

Thus, when the Muslim says: ‘*Madad Yā Allāh!* (Help, O Allāh!)’, that is ‘Support me’ ‘Help me with Your power’, ‘Assist me against Your enemy’, ‘Increase me with mercies and blessings’ and ‘Help me with the aptitude to Your obedience and to combating my ego and my demon.’⁵

¹ Translated from Shaykh Yūsuf Khaṭṭār Muḥammad’s masterpiece, *al-Mawsū‘at al-Yūsfīyya fī bayān Adillat al-Ṣūfiyya* (p. 124-134) published by Dar al-Taqwā, Damascus. This unique work is endorsed by the most prominent scholars of Damascus, such as ‘Abdul Raḥman al-Shāghūrī ﷺ, Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Turkmānī ﷺ and Shaykh Adīb Kallās, may Allāh protect him.

² This means ‘to provide with...’ because one’s providing another with physical or intangible particulars does not always require its dispatchment.

³ *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Article ۲۲۲

⁴ *Al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr*, Article ۲۲۲

⁵ The word used here is ‘my Satan’, which denotes anything or anyone which has the potential to lead man astray from the path to Allāh ﷺ.

When he says: '*Madad Yā Awliyā' Allāh!* (Help, O Saints of Allāh!)', it means: 'Teach us of what Allāh has taught you,' 'Help us with what Allāh ﷺ has helped you with of sciences and intuition', 'Assist us with that what will benefit us in our journey', 'Guide us in our comportment (*sulūk*) to the love of Allāh, with His leave;' ⁶ This does not occur other than due to most of the creatures missing out from the mercy of their Lord and He disciplines them with Islām, with the poises of the leader of all men [Prophet Muḥammad] ﷺ, therefore, they are in need of him who assists them and aids them with knowledge, He teaches them the manners of journey and comportment.

Al-madad, according to the meaning which we have mentioned [above], exists, in our lives, in theory and [also] in substance. Nobody can deny that humans seek aid by means of transportation like the car, plane, steamship and train in order to fulfil his worldly needs and conveyance by means of them from one land to another; humans cannot reach it without them but with [suffering] personal arduousness.

Surely, mariners and aviators seek the direction of their journey in the sea and in the air by means of a metallic object which is called '*al-buṣola* (the compass)'; it points them to the desired direction and this [fact] cannot be denied! So, does seeking help from metal evict [one] from the [Muslim] nation? Is valuable assistance denied [from] him [who] presents it to us, who has experience in the comportment of the path to the love of Allāh, which [itself] is surrounded by various kinds of perils, to [its] achievement⁷, without that aid, and that assistance without arduousness and hardship? It is known that the least of the enemies in this path is the ego, Satan and desire?!

From here, it is evident to us that man is in need of aid to many items from the creations of Allāh, so that they may help him with assistance for which Allāh has made subservient to him upon the hands of His creation and their manufactured articles, be they of whatever kind.

[*Madad* in the Qur'ān]

There is a difference between the aid of the Creator ﷺ and the aid of the creature.

The word '*madad*' comes with the meaning of '*musā'ada* (mutual assistance)' and '*mu'āwana* (mutual support)', and it is recommended in all kinds of goodness, in all the paths to which the orthodox Canon (*Shar'*) permits.

Isti'āna (seeking/acquiring cooperation) of people, one to the other, in affairs, is inevitable and indispensable; man is enjoined with it, particularly in affairs of goodness and God-wariness. Allāh ﷺ says:

'And assist one another in goodness and Allāh-wariness, and do not mutually cooperate in sin and hostility.'⁸

Therefore, mutual cooperation between creatures is *madad*, that is, *musā'ada* and the assistance of some of them [given] to the others. If someone seeks help from someone of his own genus,

⁶ The Saints of Allāh ﷺ do not perform actions or omissions but with the leave of Allāh ﷺ, hence the proclamation of seeking their assistance with the authority granted to them by Allāh ﷺ.

⁷ of the love of Allāh ﷺ.

⁸ Sūrat al-Mā'idah (5), Verse 2.

then that does not mean that he seeks from him as if he seeks from his Lord, but [it means] the help and power which Allāh has helped the latter with.

Imdād, according to the meaning mentioned, is of two types:

[1.] The First Type: It is *madad* administered from Allāh ﷺ. It is [that] what does not come to pass in reality but from Him and it does not become succour to the creation but through Him ﷺ. Allāh the Exalted says:

‘Out of the bounty of your Lord, we aid one and all, these ^٩ as well as those. ^{١٠} And the bounty of your Lord is not prohibited [to anyone].’ ^{١١}

meaning, as Imām al-Shawkānī ﷺ has said: ‘We extend Our bounty to him in such that it pursues him limitlessly; We bestow to the believers and to the disbelievers, the obedient and the sinful.’ ^{١٢}

[2.] The Second Type: It is [that] what Allāh ﷺ passes:

- [i.] through the hands of His noble Angels, out of whatever Allāh gives to them of strength and secrets,
- [ii.] through the hands of His Prophets, may peace be upon them, by means of miracles (*mu’jizāt*), and
- [iii.] through the hands of his Saints by means of miracles (*karāmāt*).

The difference is clearly very manifest; Allāh ﷺ helps whomsoever He wills from amongst His creatures, out of the treasures of His grace and His mercy, with support, aid and assistance against the disbelievers and the polytheists, whenever He wills, howsoever He wills and His bounty does not cease on the authority or consent of anyone.

With regards to His Prophets and His Saints, their provision of support to the seekers does not pass but with the authorisation of Allāh, His will and His consent. In reality, it is procured from the provisioning by Allāh ﷺ. Examples for that are very numerous.

Allāh ﷺ has placed Angels in this world for whom there are visible and [also] secret assignments and activities, by which they serve the creation of Allāh ﷺ with what Allāh has ordained them for.

Imām al-Rāzī ﷺ says, in his exegesis of the noble verse:

‘From Allāh, Lord of the Ways of Ascent.’ ^{١٣}

...according to me, there is a fourth aspect, and that is that these heavens are as if they were disproportionate in loftiness and depression, magnitude and minuteness, and their power and the extremity of power is according to the logic of this world (meaning, according to the command of Allah ﷺ to the power). Perhaps light is a bestowment of Allāh and the effect of the grace of His mercy, not reaching this world but by means of those spirits, either naturally or otherwise. ^{١٤}

^٩ who seek the mundane.

^{١٠} who seek the divine.

^{١١} Ṣūrat al-Isrā’ (17), Verse 20.

^{١٢} Fath al-Qadīr, 3:211.

^{١٣} Ṣūrat al-Ma’ārij (70), Verse 3.

^{١٤} Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, 24:122

He ﷺ also said, in the exegesis of the Word of Allāh the Exalted:

‘(And the Angels say:) Not one of us but has a station assigned to him.’ ¹⁵

This proves that for each one of them there is a rank which he does not exceed, and a stage from where he does not overstep. These stages are a reference to their statuses in the dispossession of the bodies of this world. ¹⁶

Allāh has indeed employed the Angels to knowing and to recording the actions of the creatures by an order from Himself ﷺ. He applies to Himself, simultaneously, the informing and the recording, [by] saying:

‘Verily, We shall raise the dead to life, and We record that which they send before and the traces which they leave behind, and of all things have We kept count in a Clear Book (of evidence).’ ¹⁷

Imām al-Tabarī ﷺ says: ‘...meaning, [that] We record that what they have sent forth of good and bad in the world and of pious actions and evil ones.’ ¹⁸

With regards to the Angels, [Allāh] the Exalted says:

‘Not a word he utters but there is a sentinel by him ready (to note it down).’ ¹⁹

He has also made them subservient for the safeguarding of the creatures, and likewise, He attributes the protection to Himself ﷺ as He says:

‘So, Allāh is the best guardian, and He is the Most-Merciful of those who show mercy.’ ²⁰

With regards to the Angels, He ﷺ also says:

‘For each (person) there are (Angels) coming in succession before him and behind him. They guard him by the command of Allāh.’ ²¹

He has enjoined the Angel of Death to seizing souls, and simultaneously, He attributes that to Himself, as He says:

‘It is Allāh who creates you and takes your souls (at death).’ ²²

With regards to the Angels, [Allāh] ﷺ says:

‘Say, ‘The Angel of Death, appointed over you, will take your souls: then shall you be brought back to your Lord.’ ²³

In this verse, the action refers to the Angel of Death by the command of Allāh ﷺ, and His leave.

¹⁵ Ṣūrat al-Sāffāt (37), Verse 164.

¹⁶ Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, 26:174

¹⁷ Ṣūrat Yā-Sīn (36), verse 12.

¹⁸ Ṣafwat al-Tafāsīr, 3:8.

¹⁹ Ṣūrat Qāf (50), Verse 18.

²⁰ Ṣūrat Yūsuf (12), Verse 64.

²¹ Ṣūrat al-Ra’d (13), Verse 11.

²² Ṣūrat al-Nāḥl (16), Verse 70.

²³ Ṣūrat al-Sajdah (32), Verse 11.

Thus, verily, Allāh ﷺ has assisted the Angels with classified [knowledge] with which they safeguard the creatures of Allāh with subservience to Him ﷺ. He is a doer of whatever He wills. Whenever miracles and strange happenings occur from the Angels, they are in reality not from them because they ²⁴ are subservient to the command of Allāh. With regards to them, our Lord ﷺ says:

‘They disobey not Allāh in what He has commanded, but they do whatever they are commanded.’ ²⁵

In this world, Allāh ﷺ has prepared assignments and actions of evident and hidden nature for His creatures²⁶, [that] what he has prepared for His Noble Angels ‘alayhim al-salām and He supports them with spiritual assistances and abilities.

Allāh has bestowed His Prophets, His Messengers and His Saints with something from the secrets upon which they render themselves to rely upon for the sake of victory of the creed of Allāh.

With them, they help those whom they will, with leave from their Lord, and His pleasure, for the establishment of the creed of Allāh ﷺ.

Imām al-Bayhaqī رض says, in his exegesis of the word of Allāh ﷺ :

‘They do not compass any of His knowledge but what He wills.’ ²⁷

meaning ‘They do not know [anything] from His knowledge except what He wills that He himself teach them with His own educating.’ ²⁸

In his exegesis of the word of Allāh ﷺ, with reference to Sayyidunā Khidr رض, [Imām] al-Baghawī رض says:

‘We taught him knowledge from Our own presence.’ ²⁹

meaning ‘the knowledge of the esoteric by way of intuition.’ ³⁰

The Prophets, blessings and peace be upon them, are of a higher status and greater in rank with Allāh than the Angels, peace be upon them, and hence, He has assisted them with some of His own attributes and He has made to pass upon their hands some miracles which, if one who denies [the belief in such] help in the first instance, and he does not know that they occurred from a known Messenger, he hears of them, he will surely decree disbelief upon its proponent and his eviction from the [Muslim] nation immediately! Evidence to this has been provided regarding what Allāh made to pass on the hand of Sayyidunā ‘Isā صلی الله علیه و آله و سلّم.

We should listen to the word of Allāh ﷺ where He attributed the reviving of the dead to Himself saying:

‘It is Allāh – He is the protector, and it is He Who gives life to the dead; it is He Who has power over all things.’ ³¹

²⁴ the Angels.

²⁵ Sūrat al-Taḥrīm (66), Verse 6.

²⁶ other than the Angels.

²⁷ Sūrat al-Baqarah (2), Verse 255.

²⁸ *Al-Asmā’u wal-Šifātu lil-Bayhaqī* (Imām al-Bayhaqī; Names and Attributes), p.143.

²⁹ Sūrat al-Kahf (18), Verse 65.

³⁰ *Ma’ālim al-Tanzil fi al-Tafsīr* (Characteristics of Revelation in Exegesis) (3/584)

³¹ Sūrat al-Shūrā (42), Verse 9.

Thereafter, with regards to Sayyidunā ‘Isā ﷺ, He says:
‘And when you bring forth the dead by My leave.’³²

Likewise, He attributes the cure of sickness to Himself ﷺ, saying:
‘And when I fall ill, it is He Who cures me.’³³

Thereafter, with regards to Sayyidunā ‘Isā ﷺ, He says:
‘And you heal the born-blind and the leper by My leave.’³⁴

He attributes creation to Himself ﷺ, saying:
‘It is He Who created all things, and ordered them in due proportions.’³⁵

Thereafter, with regards to Sayyidunā ‘Isā ﷺ, He says:
‘Behold, you make out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave, and you breathe into it and it becomes a bird by My leave.’³⁶

That is not all. After Allāh has provided Sayyidunā ‘Isā with these qualities, we see him speaking with the tongue of divine assistance and he attributes the means to himself, and the real action to its provider, as he says:

‘I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allāh’s leave: and I heal the born-blind and the leper, and I bring forth the dead by Allāh’s leave.’³⁷

This verse is greater evidence on the validity of referring suchlike words, from a figurative aspect of which there is no possibility of denial, to those upon whose hands Allāh has rendered abilities, as we have passed in the ‘Chapter of Intercession (*Tawassul*)’.

This, in essence, is greater than the words of assistance in their subject and their meaning. The blessings and goodness which Allāh ﷺ helps one of his creatures with, all those believers around him [also] achieve benefit from it. With regards to Sayyidunā Nūh ﷺ, Allāh ﷺ says:

‘O Nūh! Come down (from the Ark) with Peace from Us, and blessings upon you and on the Peoples (who will come) from those with thee.’³⁸

meaning ‘and great goodness be upon you, upon the progeny of those with you from those of the Ark’.³⁹

[Imām] al-Qurtubī ﷺ says:
‘Every believer, up until the Day of Resurrection, is included in this.’⁴⁰

³² Ḫūrūt al-Mā’idah (5), Verse 110.

³³ Ḫūrūt al-Shu‘arā’ (26), Verse 80.

³⁴ Ḫūrūt al-Mā’idah (5), Verse 110.

³⁵ Ḫūrūt al-Furqān (25), Verse 2.

³⁶ Ḫūrūt al-Mā’idah (5), Verse 110.

³⁷ Ḫūrūt āl Imrān (3), Verse 49.

³⁸ Ḫūrūt Hūd (11), Verse 48.

³⁹ Ṣafwat al-Tafāsīr (2/17)

⁴⁰ Tafsīr al-Qurtubī (9/48)

[*Madad* in the Sunnah]

The Saying of the Messenger ﷺ:

‘The similitude of a pious companion and an evil companion is as a man standing with musk, and a man stoking a furnace.’⁴¹

With whatever Allāh ﷺ assists His Messengers and His Prophets, that is by way of establishing evidence and spreading invitation [to the true path]. We know that Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷺ is the most excellent of the prophets, absolutely, just as the author of ‘al-Jawharah’ ﷺ says:

*‘wa afḍal al-khalqī ‘alā al-iṭlāqī
Nabiyyunā, fa-mal ‘an al-shiqāqī’*
[The Best of Creation with certainty,
is our Prophet undoubtedly.]

With this, [it is clear that] the assistance given to him ﷺ by Allāh ﷺ is better and greater than all that what He bestowed to all of the Prophets and Messengers, because Allāh appointed every Prophet as a missionary and a caller for his own nation but the appointing of the Beloved Muṣṭafā was for [all of] the creation collectively.

One of the righteous said:

Surely, the helping which Allāh gives forth to His Prophets is like a leased trust with them so that they may work for the guidance of the creatures to the obedience of their Lord by means of it.

In honour of His Prophet ﷺ, has Allāh ﷺ not said:

‘And verily you guide (men) to the Straight Path.’⁴²

He ﷺ, in his honour ﷺ, also says:

‘It is He Who sent amongst the unlettered a Messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His signs, to sanctify them and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, even though, they had been, before, in manifest error.’⁴³

So, as long as Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷺ is the bearer of mercy and divine kindliness to the worlds, and of the secrets of sanctification for the entire world, then this remains such that he helps the creatures with mercy and kindliness, by the leave of Allāh.

The noble verse is clear with regards to the word ‘*yuzakkīhim* (he sanctifies them)’, hence, by the grace of Allāh and by the means of the bestowment of Allāh to him, he is able to apply sanctification to whomsoever follows him and obeys him.

Thus, he has rectified those who were the most evil of people during the [period of] Ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*) and the most uncouth in killing and disbelief, and thereafter, they became the most noble of people and the most beautiful of them in manners, religion and faith.

⁴¹ related by Bukhārī (2101), Muslim (6635), Aḥmad (4/408), Ibn Ḥabbān (561), Mawqūf by al-Tayālāsī (515), al-Qaḍā’ī (1380), from Abū Mūsā related by al-Baghawī (3483)

⁴² Ṣūrat al-Shūrā (42), Verse 52.

⁴³ Ṣūrat al-Jumu‘ah (62), Verse 2.

Surely, Allāh ﷺ bestowed Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷺ with capacity and aid so that he may guide the creation.

In his blessed bosom, he bears spiritual support with which he helps the slaves of Allāh by His leave. Qādī al-Bayḍāwī ﷺ says, in his exegesis of the verse:

'I am about to place My deputy in the earth', ⁴⁴

he says:

Verily, His ﷺ deputising is not based on incapacity and need; far loftier is Allāh from that in highness and greatness, but that it is based on the incapability of he who is deputised: His ﷺ interaction in delegating excellences and intimacies to His creation is [dependant] upon their readiness. So, whoever is prepared to receive their delegation directly, He Himself delegates to him without the means of any Angel, and whoever does not receive it but from him who is of the same genus as him, He delegates it to him with the means of Prophets, peace and blessings be upon them, for indeed their visionary strength is superior to the strength of all of the people, in such that by virtue of their strength, they can derive the lights of sciences and intimacies to render them to be given the beacon of insight placed into the crystalline heart that occupies the pendent lamp of the torso, which in turn embrases that crystal with the oil of the soul, clean of impurities, in such that it may be that its oil, which is for the purpose of purifying it, illuminates, although fire does not even touch it. ⁴⁵

The words of [Qādī] al-Bayḍāwī end here.

'Al-Madad', therefore, is that divine light which Allāh ﷺ showers over the hearts of His Prophets and His Saints, [comprised] of mercies, blessings and secrets.

In reality, every proof which we have mentioned with respect to the affirmation of intercession, in general, and with respect to those absent and the dead, in particular, is valid, in order for it to be evidence to justify aid. Here, we shall mention some of them, and we shall extend upon them, Allāh willing.

Of that is what Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd ﷺ narrates, that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

'Whenever the sumpter of any of you runs away in open country, he should call out: 'O slaves of Allāh! Capture for me my sumpter!', for indeed, there are some of Allāh's attendants in the land; they will capture it for you.' ⁴⁶

Imām al-Nawawī ﷺ says that he experienced it and so did some of the elders from his teachers and its impact had been felt.

⁴⁴ Ṣūrat al-Baqarah (2), Verse 30.

⁴⁵ Hāshiyat (Notes) Tafsīr al-Qādī al-Bayḍāwī (1/23 or 27)

⁴⁶ It was related by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (10518), by Abū Ya’lā (5269) and al-Haythamī mentioned it in *Majma’ al-Zawā’id* (17105)

It has come [to us] in a noble Ḥadīth, also from Sayyidunā ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwān ﷺ, that he said:

‘The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ‘Whenever any of you lose something, or he seeks help, and that he is in a land without a friend, he should say: ‘O slaves of Allāh! Help me! O slaves of Allāh! Help me!’, for Allāh the Exalted has many slaves whom we do not see.’⁴⁷

Al-Ḥāfiẓ says: ‘With regards to the Ḥadīth of ‘Utbah ﷺ, it is a testimony to the Ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ said:

‘Verily, Allāh has Angels in the land, other than the *Hafaza* (Angels of Protection), who write [even] that leaf of a tree which falls away. So, whenever any of you suffer hobbling in deserted land, he should call out: ‘O slaves of Allāh, come to my aid.’⁴⁸

Helping, here, is not like the helping of Allāh to his creation; in fact it is the teaching, informing, guiding and aiding by the leave of Allāh.

There is evidence in these narrations that surely Allāh ﷺ has specified some slaves for classified knowledge and helping so that they may serve the believers therewith whenever there are vast distances between the caller and the replier [to the call]. All of that is with the command of Allāh. This is a clear proof of the permissibility of seeking help from the slaves of Allāh.

This does not contradict the Ḥadīth

‘Whenevver you ask, ask from Allāh, and whenever you seek aid, seek aid from Allāh’⁴⁹

as has passed us in the [section on] Intercession (*tawassu*l) and Seeking Help (*istighātha*).

(*Nazrah*, Sympathy):

Whatever has been said with regards to the meaning of help and seeking it from Allāh by mediation of the living and the moving, the similar has been said with regards to the meaning of *Nazrah* (Sympathy); whoever says the word ‘*Nazrah*’, is making intercession or seeking help. He intends, when he says:

‘Have sympathy on me (*unzur ilayya*) (O Messenger of Allāh, or O Saints of Allāh). A glance of mercy and aid, and mediate for me with Allāh that He fulfil my need.’

This is the essence of the meaning of ‘*aghīthūnī* (help me)’, ‘*aīnūnī* (support me)’, ‘*yā Muḥammad, yā Muḥammadāh* (O Muḥammad)’, and words other than these which have passed us in relation to the discussion of evidences.

They sought help from Prophets and the Righteous; they do not give it to them⁵⁰ but that their acknowledgement to their inadequacy in presenting that what Allāh has enjoined upon them is in

⁴⁷ It was related by al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Fath al-Kabīr* ((1/83)

⁴⁸ Shaykh ‘Abdul Qādir Arna‘ūt says: ‘al-Ḥāfiẓ said: ‘This is a Ḥadīth of [grade] *ḥasan* chain of narration.’ (*al-Adhkār li al-Nawawī*, pp. 192)’

⁴⁹ It was related by Tirmidhī (2516). He said: ‘This Ḥadīth is [graded] *ḥasan saḥīḥ*. Ahmād [also relates it]’ (1/293)

⁵⁰ the creatures/people.

completeness, and their inability to reach the stations of *ihsān* (beneficence). ⁵¹ Thus, they sought the helping and assistance from Allāh by means of the chosen righteous people and the pious saints, for whom there is strength and great capacity, by the grace of Allāh, in obedience, honesty, sanctity, worship, sincerity and intuition with the etiquettes of veneration. This is nothing but the emulation of whatever Allāh commanded the Companions of Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷺ, in His word:

‘And if they, when they have wronged their own souls, come humbly to you [O dear Prophet Muḥammad] and seek forgiveness from Allāh, and the Messenger intercedes for them, they will certainly find Allāh as the Most Acceptor Of Repentance, the Most Merciful.’ ⁵²

The blessed verse guides us to the etiquettes of asking and seeking.

- [1.] Firstly, He commanded us to approach the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, thereafter,
- [2.] the seeking of forgiveness by the sinner for himself in the presence of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, thereafter,
- [3.] his confession to his lack of ability in seeking from Allāh due to the blackness of his slate [of deeds] with Allāh. So,
- [4.] he seeks from the Messenger ﷺ that he seek forgiveness for him.

This is not but that the seeking of forgiveness of the Messenger ﷺ for them is more excellent and closer to acceptance than them, because he possesses sincerity, sanctity of the heart and firmness in obedience much greater than what the repenting petitioner possesses.

The petitioner first asks his Lord, and from there, he seeks help from he who is higher than him whilst confessing to his [own] incapacity and that he [himself] is unqualified for the [fulfilled] return of his supplication. Therefore, he becomes bound by the Book and the Sunnah, by deed and by word.

The statement of the petitioner:

‘*Madad Yā Rasūl Allāh* (Help! O Messenger of Allāh)’

meaning, ‘Ask forgiveness for me and teach me of what Allāh has taught you, by His leave.’ Likewise, when he says:

‘*Madad Yā Awliyā’ Allāh* (Help! O Saints of Allāh),’

meaning [that] he seeks the means to Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷺ from them, seeking intercession, forgiveness and beneficence. Every human who is a beginner in the affairs of religion and sanctification is dependent on knowledge which would advance him in this area.

Whosoever goes to the doctor and seeks help from him with his saying:

‘O Doctor, rid me of my pains.’,

is he at fault because he sought help from a human to help him with healing by means of drugs? Certainly not! [This is] because Allāh has rendered means and causes amongst his creation. The striving of the slaves [of Allāh] in search for livelihoods, and likewise the pharmacologist’s treating of a woman with drugs and medicines, is definitely with knowledge, for Allāh ﷺ is the provider to the slaves with wealth and children, which does not contradict the word of Allāh:

⁵¹ The creatures who ask for such help must acknowledge their own incapacity in reaching the stations of *ihsān* and in beseeching Allāh ﷺ in a befitting manner.

⁵² *Ṣūrat al-Nisā’* (4), Verse 64.

‘And will aid you with wealth and sons’ ⁵³

And that in which there is no doubt is that verily Allāh ﷺ has made the creatures dependent upon one another, with His wisdom, so that they may provide benefit to one another, by His leave. Each species provides benefit to its own kind. The sun throws its own light onto the moon at night, and the moon reflects its light onto the earth. This phenomenon is called ‘the aid of reflection’.

From here we see that man acquires benefit from these created lights by means and mediations. Allāh ﷺ has the power to illuminate the earth without the sun or the moon, and nor is He in need of either of the two and nor of [anything] other than them from His creatures.

He ﷺ says:

‘It is He Who created the sun radiating and the moon a light’ ⁵⁴

The sun or the moon are not greater than the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, to whom He has gifted power greater than the sun and the moon, which illuminates the world of hearts with the light of the lamp of his [own] heart, by leave of his Lord, as the word of [Allāh] ﷺ [says]:

‘O Herald of the Hidden! ⁵⁵ We have indeed sent you as an observing present witness and a Herald of glad tidings and warning. And as a caller towards Allah, by His leave, and as a sun that enlightens.’ ⁵⁶

Surely, the seeking of aid by a disciple from his teacher is nothing but the reflection of the heart of the complete sage (*al-wālī al-kāmil*), which is more excellent with Allāh upon the heart of the disciple, than the sun and the moon,. Undoubtedly, the teacher (Shaykh) is one of the heirs of the Prophet ﷺ, as he ﷺ said:

‘Verily, the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets,’ ⁵⁷

and in that very Ḥadīth, he says,

‘the superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like the superiority of the moon over all the stars’. ⁵⁸

He said ‘like the superiority of the moon’ because he ﷺ is the illuminating sun. Just as the sun shines its light on the moon, and [in turn] the moon reflects its light onto the earth, likewise, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ shines his light on the hearts of the Saints, and [in turn] they reflect that light onto the disciples.

When the acquiring of help between inanimate bodies is proven, how can it then be denied between creatures of the humankind, in so much that Allāh has created man in the best formation and He has dignified the children of Ādām [‘*alayhi s-salām*]?!

⁵³ Sūrat Nūh (71), Verse 12.

⁵⁴ Sūrat Yūnus (10), Verse 5.

⁵⁵ A more correct meaning to the Arabic word ‘*Nabī*’ in relation to its more commonly used English translation ‘prophet’.

⁵⁶ Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33), verses 45 – 46.

⁵⁷ It was related by Ibn Ḥabbān (1/88), Abu Dawūd (3641), Ibn Mājah (223), Dārimī (1/98), Ahmad (5/196) and Tirmidhī (2682)

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

The Muḥaddith,⁵⁹ the ascetic, the jurist, Imām Ibn Abū Jumrah al-Andalūsī ﷺ, in his commentary to the Ḥadīth of ‘lying’ says:

...This is the reason why he ﷺ rendered the meeting of a believer with his believing brother with a cheerful mien as charity, because the believer acquires support from his brother according to whatever is evident from his exterior, just as the esoterics acquire aid from each other according to whatever is in their inner selves...⁶⁰

The jurist, Imām Muḥammad Amīn Effendī, also known as Ibn ‘Ābidīn [al-Shāmī], mentions in his treatise ‘*al-Fawā’id al-Mukhaṣṣa* (Specific Benefits)’ where he says:

...I saw, therein, two memorandums: the first from ‘*Umdat al-Muhaqqiqīn, Faqīh al-Nafs, Abūl Ikhlas*’, al-Shaykh Ḥasan al-Sharanbulālī al-Wafā’ī ﷺ, and the second from *Hadrat al-Ustādh*, one who grasped both the exoteric and the esoteric sciences, guide of the seekers and trainer of ascetics, Sayyidī ‘Abdul Ghanī al-Nabulsī, may Allāh ennoble his secret, and may He repeat us with his blessings, Amen. So, I decided to mention the contents of whatever is in these two memorandums, seeking the aid of Allāh ﷺ, seeking the assistance of these two great Imāms...

This great Imām, Ibn ‘Ābidīn, is he, the scholarly status of whom, is not hidden from any student of noble knowledge, seeks aid from the helping of nobles, and that he ﷺ knows for sure that the one who provides help to these nobles is indeed Allāh ﷺ. He seeks the help of his Lord by means of the righteousness and the Allāh-wariness of these nobles. There are very many examples to this.

From here, the permissibility of seeking the aid of the Saints (meaning to seek help from them) is now clear to us, with the condition that whilst seeking, one firmly believes that there is nothing in this world which passes but by the leave of Allāh ﷺ, with His will and with His knowledge.

Surely, the Saint, when he helps the seekers, he helps them with that what Allāh has provided him help with. He does not benefit the people with anything from other than Allāh. Verily, the giver of loss and the provider of profit is indeed Allāh ﷺ. All of the benefits which manifested at the hands of the Prophets, peace and blessings be upon them, and the Saints ﷺ, of mysterious miracles and supernatural occurrences, they are not but indications to the bounties of the Great Munificent ﷺ, that appear at the hand of him who has been favoured upon from [amongst] the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous. Surely, Allāh’s providing of help to His Messengers and His Saints is according to what Allāh intends and wills, and the providing of help by the Messengers and the Saints to the rest of the slaves is also according to what Allāh intends and wills. There is no verse [of the Qur’ān] nor any Ḥadīth which attributes the charge of apostasy to him who seeks aid, legally valid procurement of support, with the Prophets and the Righteous, and he who claims [otherwise], he is bound [to furnish] evidence:

‘Bring your proof if you are truthful.’⁶¹

The conclusion of our message is with praise to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds.

⁵⁹ Master of Ḥadīth.

⁶⁰ Bahjat al-Nufūs (3/62 – 63)

⁶¹ Ṣūrat al-Baqarah (2), Verse 111.